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A D D R E S S

TO THE

N A T I O N,

FROM THE

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,

ON THE SUBJECT OF A THOROUGH

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM;

Together with the RESOLUTIONS which were passed at a
General meeting of the SOCIETY;

Held on MONDAY, the 8th of JULY, 1793.

AT THE

CROWN AND ANCHOR TAVERN STRAND,

Printed by Order of the SOCIETY, and distributed [Gratis.]

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TO THE
N A T I O N,
FROM THE
LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

GLOOMY as is the prospect now before us, and unpleasing as is the task to bring forth into open day the calamitous situation of our Country: We conceive it necessary to direct the public eye, to the cause of our misfortunes, and to awaken the sleeping reason of our Countrymen, to the pursuit of the only remedy which can ever prove effectual, namely;—*A thorough Reform in Parliament, by the adoption of an equal Representation obtained by Annual Elections and Universal Suffrage.*—We do not address you in the confidence of personal importance.—We do not presume upon the splendor of exalted situation; but as Members of the same Society, as Individuals, zealously labouring for the welfare of the Community; we think ourselves entitled to a share of your attention.

At a time when many of the now accumulated evils although not unforeseen, were yet at a distance. The *London Corresponding Society* united, and called upon their Fellow Citizens to join with them in reclaiming a Right stolen by Treachery, and with-held by Oppression.

pression.—Ignorance, the most strenuous supporter of Despotism, We laboured to destroy; the Rights of the People to an equal Representation We publickly supported, and proved the restoration of those Rights, to be the only permanent remedy to the then existing grievances!—Grievances which for want of that remedy, have in the short space of Eighteen months been encreased ten-fold on this credulous, supine, and unsuspecting Nation.

Success attended the endeavours of our Society; but a success no ways adequate to the importance of our Cause! Deep rooted prejudices adopted by ignorance, cherished by interest, and confirmed by apathy, very much impeded the progress that might have been made upon the understanding of a Nation, which boasts itself to be the most enlightened in Europe. Experience has however, proved that the public mind is too generally enervated by luxury, or borne down by misery and oppression.

Here it is proper to remind you of the false and calumnious aspersions, which have been so industriously circulated since November last: At that time of general Consternation, when the cry of danger to the Constitution was raised and extensively propagated; when the alarm of *Riots and Insurrections*, was sounded by Royal Proclamations and re-echoed by Parish Associations; Reform was branded by the name of Innovation, and whoever dared to affirm, that the House of Commons ought to be restored to that state of Independence in which it was settled at the Revolution; and that unnecessary Places and Pensions ought to be abolished, was stigmatized as a leveller and a enemy to his King and Country.

Even the dependants of Ministry, have in Parliament acknowledged, that those reports of Riots and Insurrections were groundless; but that acknowledgement though evincing the criminality of those *trump-*
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ed-up falsehoods has not lessened their effect on this deluded nation.

Yet no ways discouraged by these alarms, by the fullsome effusions of what was falsely called loyalty,* nor by that torrent of prejudice which for awhile set reason and reflection equally at defiance: We pursued with firmness the course prescribed by the Constitution, for obtaining a redress of Grievances, and disregarding the visionary alarms of Sedition, our Constitutional Rights proved our shield against the most dangerous Combination of Interest and Prejudice, that ever threatened the Liberties of a Free Country.

Our Petition to parliament was received—read—and ordered to lay on the Table—the principle contained therein: “That no man shall be taxed, but by
“the consent of himself, or his Representative freely
“chosen by himself.” Neither was, nor could be denied to be a *Principle* of our Constitution; but its effects *could* at that time be evaded by those whose interest it was to perpetuate abuses at the expence of the public.

The protraction of Reform, however, has not been the only evil which has arisen from the credit so rashly given to reports of Riots and Insurrections. To that credulity, and to the want of circumspection, naturally attendant on the fears so artfully raised, we may justly attribute the present Ruinous and Disgraceful War—overlooking the aggrandizement of Russia, and disregarding the cruel dismemberment of Poland; under the flimsy excuse of assisting *those who apparently did not care to fight for themselves, our Allies the Dutch*; the National Honour has been staked; the minister has been armed with new and unexampled powers, and the troops

* *Loyalty*, is derived from the old French word *Loyalté*, and strictly signifies an attachment to the laws; but by the fraudulent practices of Courtiers, exercised with too much success on vulgar ignorance, the term is often perverted to signify, an attachment to Kings, and their measures, even when evidently in opposition to law, and the Constitution of the Country.

troops of Britain, have been sent to co-operate with the most detestable of Despots.

British gold, now subsidizes armies of Continental Slaves, and the blood of half Europe is pledged for the destruction of France! supplies of every kind are sent from hence! Commerce is nearly stopped! Failures innumerable take place! Manufacturers are ruined! Artizans are starving! Provisions rise in price! the Revenue decreases, and fresh Taxes are wanting! for fresh supplies of blood, the Liberties of our Country are invaded! the Seaman is forcibly torn from his family! the Peasant kidnapped from the plough! and the starving Labourer is compelled to sell his Life and his Liberty for Bread.—If such, O much oppressed Britons! are the effects of a Four months' War, what are you to expect when it shall have lasted as many years?

Still farther to encrease our private calamities, and to augment our national disgrace; we have seen offers of Peace spurned with contempt, and the breach between the two countries widened by the rejection of Reconciliation; thus are we doomed to a continuance of National misery, and to an addition of National dishonour from a War commenced with injustice, prosecuted with inquisitorial obstinacy, and likely to end in internal infamy.

To palliate the injustice of the War, France is reproached with Anarchy; while despots and their ministers, boast their diabolical skill in promoting it. To soothe the public grievances, the agents of Corruption have ever since the commencement of the War, predicted that the distracted state of France, must in a few weeks put a period to it. Predictions so repeatedly falsified must be attributed either to fraud or folly.

Conscious as we are, that the trading and commercial interests of this Country, are neither *satisfied* of the policy of the War, nor *deceived* by any delusive prospect of success, we cannot attribute the little resistance which

which has hitherto been made to it; to any thing else than the depraved state of the Representation; for had they that weight in Parliament, which the spirit of the Constitution evidently intended, and which was confirmed by the Revolution in 1688, We doubt not their open declarations against a War so hostile to their interests, and to the cause of Humanity, would ere now have refuted the fictitious idea of its being popular, necessary or just.

To obtain a compleat Representation is our only aim—contemning all party distinctions, we seek no advantage which every individual of the community will not enjoy equally with ourselves—We are not engaged in Speculative and Theoretical schemes; the motive of our present conduct is the actual sense of injury and oppression; We feel the weight of innumerable abuses, to which the invasion of our rights has given birth, and which their restoration can alone remove.

But sensible that our efforts, if not seconded by the Nation at large, must prove ineffectual, and only needlessly expose us to the malevolence of the public plunderers; we conjure you, by the love you bear your country, by your attachment to freedom, and by your anxious care for the welfare of your posterity, to suffer yourselves no longer to be deluded by artful speeches, and by interested men; but to sanction with your approbation, our constitutional endeavours, and pursue with union and firmness the track we have pointed out; Thus countenanced by our country, we pledge ourselves, as you will perceive by the following resolutions, never to recede or slacken, but on every occasion to redouble our zealous exertions, in the cause of Constitutional Freedom.

RESOLVED;

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

I. That nothing but a fair, adequate and annually renovated Representation in Parliament, can ensure the freedom of this country.

II. That we are fully convinced, a thorough Parliamentary Reform, would remove every grievance under which we labour.

III. That we will never give up the pursuit of such Parliamentary Reform.

IV. That if it be a part of the power of the king to declare war when and against whom he pleases, we are convinced that such power must have been granted to him under the condition, that it should ever be subservient to the national advantage.

V. That the present war against France, and the existing alliance with the Germanic Powers, so far as it relates to the prosecution of that war, has hitherto produced, and is likely to produce nothing but national calamity, if not utter ruin.

VI. That it appears to Us that the wars in which Great Britain has engaged, within the last hundred years, have cost her upwards of *Three Hundred and Seventy Millions!* not to mention the private misery occasioned thereby, or the lives sacrificed; therefore it is a dreadful speculation for the people of this country to look up to; That the Cabinet have engaged in a treaty with a foreign Prince, to be supplied with troops for a long period of years, and for a purpose unknown to the people of England.

VII. That we are persuaded the majority, if not the whole of those wars, originated in Cabinet intrigue, rather than in absolute necessity.

VIII. That every nation has an unalienable right to chuse the mode in which it will be governed, and that it is an act of Tyranny and Oppression in any other nation to interfere with, or attempt to controul their choice.

IX. That

IX. That peace being the greatest of blessings, ought to be sought most diligently by every wise government, to be most joyfully accepted when reasonably proffered, and to be concluded most speedily when the object of the war is accomplished.

X. That we do exhort every well wisher to his country, not to delay in improving himself in constitutional knowledge.

XI. That those men who were the first to be seized with a panic, should be the last whom prudence would entrust with the management of a war.

XII. That Great Britain is not Hanover!

XIII. That regarding union as indispensably necessary to ensure success, we will endeavour to the utmost of our power, to unite more closely with every political Society in the nation, associated upon the same principles with ourselves.

XIV. That the next general Meeting of this Society, be held on the first Monday in September, unless the Committee of Delegates shall find it necessary to call such meeting sooner.

XV. That the foregoing Address and Resolutions be signed by the Chairman and by the Secretary, and that *Twenty Thousand Copies* of them be printed, published and distributed [gratis.]

MAURICE MARGAROT, CHAIRMAN.

THOMAS HARDY, SECRETARY.

Monday, July 8, 1793,
Crown and Anchor Tavern,
Strand.

The Chairman having left the Chair, it was unanimously Resolved That the thanks of this Society be given to Citizen MARGAROT, for the great attention which he has given to the interests of this Society, and particularly, for his impartiality and proper conduct at this meeting.

It was likewise unanimously Resolved, That, the Thanks of this Society be given to Citizen HARDY, for his unremitting perseverance and exertions in the Cause of Freedom.

